

MINUTES  
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission  
Zoom Meeting – October 5, 2020 – 4 p.m.  
New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: Tom Maddux  
Sheila Shannon  
Scot Savitch  
Judi Baldini

Absent: John Antonio, Chairman

Also Present: Ron Vukelich

In Mr. Antonio's absence, Mr. Maddux called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

**Minutes**

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 14, 2020, meeting as presented was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

**Old Business**

**37 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street – Mr. DiAlessandro**

An Application to remove a tree on the side of the house on Harmony Street that is uplifting the sidewalk and has limbs overhanging the apartments that was tabled at the September 14, 2020 meeting was reintroduced. Mr. Savitch explained the Mr. DiAlessandro's insurance company has stated the tree is "causing an unsafe situation with the sidewalk" and he is asking the City to resolve the issue. He added that the tree needs to be trimmed, but does not need to be removed. Clarification in writing from the insurance company as to what the exact "unsafe situation" is and what they want done is necessary before the Application can be considered. It was noted that both the tree and the sidewalk are the responsibility of the property owner. Mr. Maddux proposed having Mr. Antonio discuss the matter with the City Administrator.

A Motion to have the property owner obtain written clarification from his insurance company as to what the exact issue is with the tree was made and seconded. On vote, the Motion carried unanimously.

**State Grant Funding**

Mr. Maddux noted the meeting between Ms. Braunskill, Ms. Davindson, Mr. Vukelich and he was very productive relative to applying for State Grant Funding. Ms. Braunskill and Ms. Davidson will attend the November TAC meeting to answer any questions relative to the State Grant.

**Princeton Elm Tree**

Mr. Maddux stated the planting of the Princeton Elm tree has been postponed to Spring 2021. Mr. Vukelich explained the delay was due to a fall dig hazard because of the type of tree.

### **New Tree Plantings**

Mr. Maddux made a Motion to plant the same species or cultivar of tree when two or more trees are being considered for planting in a series. The Motion was seconded.

The Commissioners conducted an extensive discussion of whether like species or a mix of two alternating species of trees planted in a series is more interesting and/or aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Vukelich suggested following the Washington Model, noting that would also enhance a continuity of architecture. Two other planting options were also mentioned: (1) planting one cultivar on one side of a street and a complimenting cultivar on the other side of the same street; and (2) planting a different cultivar on each side of a city block.

A Motion to table the Application was made. There already being a Motion on the Floor, the Motion failed.

Mr. Maddux called for a vote on the Motion on the floor. On vote:

Mr. Maddux – yes

Ms. Shannon – yes

Ms. Baldini – no

Mr. Savitch – yes

The Motion carried with a vote of three in favor and one opposed.

### **Commissioner's Comments**

Ms. Baldini recommended that all Applications presented at the meeting should be considered.

Mr. Maddux opined that in-person inspection of trees in Applications submitted to the Commission is very important and stated he would not vote on disposition of a tree that he had not personally inspected.

Mr. Maddux made a Motion to postpone discussion of Applications presented at the September Tree Advisory Commission meeting until the Chairman is present. The Motion was not seconded and the Motion failed.

Mr. Savitch recommended that his photographs of the Applications be reviewed for consideration. Ms. Shannon stated the importance of having the Chairman present to review Applications that will be passed on to the City Administrator for review; and suggested that Applications that do not require City input can be considered by the Commissioners. Ms. Baldini noted a number of Applications that she felt the Commission could consider.

### **New Applications**

#### **Memorial Tree – Ann Harrison**

Ms. Harrison submitted an Application requesting information on planting a memorial tree. The Application is incomplete and requires a property address, proposed species, and proposed location of tree before any recommendations can be made by the Commission. Mr. Maddux will reach out to the property owner.

**103 Harmony Street – Kathy Warner**

Ms. Warner submitted an Application requesting repair to the sidewalk that has been damaged by tree roots. During discussion it was noted that the tree roots have torn the curb out and the tree roots need to be addressed. Mr. Maddux stated that Ms. Warner told him she wanted the Application withdrawn so she could resubmit the Application to have the subject tree removed.

A Motion to table the Application at the request of the property owner was made. There was no second and the Motion failed.

**734 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street – Katherine Lewis**

Ms. Lewis submitted an Application to have a neighbor's tree removed that she fears may fall on her house. It was noted that overhanging limbs are an issue; however, because the tree is privately owned, trimming the overhanging limbs is not within the purview of the Tree Advisory Commission. Mr. Maddux will discuss the situation with Mr. Antonio and recommend that the issue be submitted to the City Administrator for review.

**24 and 26 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – David Atherton**

Mr. Atherton sent an email to the Commission asking questions about sidewalk bricks being uplifted by tree roots in the sidewalk between his townhouse and his neighbors. Mr. Savitch will review the City Code and respond to the property owner's questions. Mr. Vukelich will attend to the roots in the bricks. Ms. Burgmuller recommended that Mr. Furio or Mr. Barthel be consulted relative to any work being planned on West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

**1106 Washington Street – Nathaniel Menefee**

Mr. Menefee submitted an Application to have a tree planted by the City in conjunction with work on Washington Street inspected because they are growing crooked and will eventually grow into the wires. During discussion it was noted that the tree is a London Plane and will grow to between 60' and 70'. Mr. Maddux stated this issue should be reviewed with Mr. Antonio and brought to the attention of the City Administrator.

Mr. Maddux will have Mr. Antonio contact Mr. Savitch regarding some of the New Business issues.

There being no further business to discuss, a Motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. On vote, the Motion was unanimously approved and the Meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Kathy Weirich  
Stenographer